

VOTE SMART



Your impartial
how-to-vote
guide for the
NSW election

EVERY PROMISE ANALYSED | VOTERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

MICK'S PICKS

EDITOR'S BEST



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Promises galore to cool our schools

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Hip-pocket

THE BIG ISSUES

LINDA SILMALIS



SHANAYA DELBRIDGE, 20

OCCUPATION..... Hairdresser
LOCATION..... Broken Hill
ELECTORATE..... Barwon
2016 VOTE..... n/a
2019 VOTE..... **LABOR**

WHY Our family has always voted Labor, my Pop is a Labor man, so I'll be sticking to that. To be honest, politics doesn't make too much sense to me.

IF there is a single issue that is uniting NSW voters, it is the cost of living.

Stagnant wages, already high electricity bills further bloated by airconditioners that ran overtime during the recent summer heatwave together with tolls and petrol costs have left households in both the city and the bush cash-poor.

With the issue topping the list of internal polls of the major parties, both Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Labor leader Michael Daley have been splashing the cash in a bid to ease the pain.

Facing a revolt in the bush, the Nationals have offered \$250 travel cards to 400,000 seniors in regional areas to use on trains and buses, with around 130,000 self-funded retirees to also receive \$200 rebates on their energy bills.

Over-60s will also receive a shopping discount under a new "seniors saver card".

To help reduce power bills, the Co-

alition has offered no-interest loans for household installations of solar energy and battery storage.

The Coalition will also offer parents two "Active Kids vouchers" per schoolchild per year, doubling the initial offer.

Also aiming for the hip-pocket, Labor declared schoolchildren would no longer have to pay to use public transport — or to wear glasses.

Parents would also no longer have to pay for birth certificates, while the airport station access fee would be reduced from \$14.30 to \$5.

Commuters stranded as a result of a late train would receive a fair refund, while one-quarter of new housing developments on formerly state-owned land would be required to be used for "affordable housing". Labor has targeted power bills, offered 500,000 solar rebates and pledged to re-regulate power networks to put downward pressure on prices.

However, Labor's biggest cost-of-living policy to date has been the pledge to return the M4 cashback scheme, a move

Kasey Wither with her children Phoebe, 3, Maible-Rose, 5, and Seanna, 8, at home in Narellan, Western Sydney. Picture: Sam Rutty



heartland hots up

that it believes will help ease the financial burden for thousands of motorists travelling to and from Western Sydney.

After cost of living, voter concerns vary seat by seat, although parties say the second-most important issue in the city is congestion and development, including the need for “family spaces”.

The Coalition has pledged more open space while promising to install a Minister for Public Spaces to identify and protect publicly owned land for use as parks or public spaces.

Declaring Sydney’s planning system “off the rails”, Mr Daley pledged to stop the controversial practice of a spot zoning, where developers can bypass council.

As for easing congestion, the Coalition is spruiking the merits of its yet-to-be opened major transport projects from WestConnex to the Metro.

In the bush, drought has pushed water management to the top of the list of voter concerns, with the dead fish of the Murray Darling setting the scene for a battle in the Nationals’ seat of Barwon.



The crippling drought has the National Party in the hands of angry bush voters. Picture: Sam Ruttyn



MATT SIMMONDS, 32

OCCUPATION.....IT
LOCATION.....Albury
ELECTORATE.....Albury
2016 VOTE.....Liberal
2019 VOTE **LIBERAL**

WHY At this stage, I'll be voting Liberal. Liberal Party policies resonate more with me than any other party. I'm interested what the new candidate for the Liberal Party can do for us. Personally some state funding for a 50m indoor pool would ultimately win my vote.



SHENAYD PATE, 24

OCCUPATION.....Teacher
LOCATION.....Bell
ELECTORATE.....Blue Mountains
2016 VOTE.....Minor Party
2019 VOTE **GREENS**

WHY I will be voting for action on climate change and renewable energy sources, a topic going unnoticed by other parties. As an advocate for the health of young people I'll be voting for harm minimisation with pill testing to be introduced at music festivals.



MONICA O'BRIEN, 80

OCCUPATION.....Retired
LOCATION.....Mudgee
ELECTORATE.....Dubbo
2016 VOTE.....Labor
2019 VOTE **LABOR**

WHY Among my many concerns are public health funding, cuts in funding for public schools, we need government investment in renewable energy. The replacing of Sydney stadium is also a major issue for me. The millions of dollars wasted on this is typical of the LNP government's mindset.

Families paying the price in a city that never cools down

THE HEARTLAND
GEORGIA HING

IT was lovely and cool inside the Wither family's Narellan home through our scorching summer, but parents Kasey and Paul Withers knew they'd have to pay the price.

With a power bill regularly hitting \$900 per quarter, airconditioning feels like both a luxury and a necessity in Sydney's west, and Mr and Mrs Wither say it's just another way that Sydney's cost of living has soared.

Mrs Wither, 33, says she and Mr Wither, 34, count themselves lucky that they bought their house before the boom.

"Thankfully rising house prices haven't affected us too much because we bought this place in 2011, just before the housing market boom, so we're in a better position than most," Mrs Wither said.

"But Paul and I now have three kids so with all their sport, schooling, shoes and uniforms, the cost of living does add up."

Rising costs like electricity, schooling, childcare and petrol meant that life was financially better in 2011 for the Withers.

"Our biggest expense at the moment is the mortgage. But on top of that everything else is also more expensive and wages haven't really increased either."

Mrs Wither's two eldest daughters, Seanna, 8, and Maiple-Rose, 6, both attend public schools, which eases the

COST OF LIVING POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL
\$250 travel cards for seniors, \$200 Active Kids vouchers, no-interest loans for household solar and batteries, and more parks and open space.

LABOR
Free Opal transport for children, rebates for solar household installation, re-regulate power network, M4 tolls cashback.

financial burden. But childcare costs for their youngest, Phoebe, 3, costs them about \$90 a day, even at one of the cheapest centres in the area.

"Having our littlest one in childcare is more of a financial concern because it takes a chunk out of our income," Mrs Withers said.

Traffic has also become more difficult for the couple over the past few years, especially since Mrs Wither has returned to work.

"Both my husband and I drive to and from work," she said.

"Traffic is a nightmare if you're not leaving at the crack of dawn, or you're driving in peak hour."

Mrs Wither drives from their home in Narellan to Sydney Olympic Park a couple of days a week, while her husband Paul works full time in Kingsgrove.

"Unfortunately we can't really avoid the tolls and I pay for parking at work as well."

"It's a big issue, especially when you're paying tolls and still having to sit in bumper-to-bumper traffic."

Express service to crush central

DAILY COMMUTE

MIRANDA WOOD

AS HUNDREDS of thousands commuters make their way to and from work each day stuck on jam-packed train carriages and crawling along clogged, tolled motorways, the state government is valiantly sticking with its message of short-term pain for long-term gain.

Sydney residents have waited patiently for years to reclaim their streets from the construction sites they have become.

From the orange safety barriers lining the trouble-plagued Light Rail in George St to the acquisition of homes to make way for WestConnex, suburbs and lives across the city have been affected by the transport and infrastructure boom.

The next major ribbon-cutting — the North West Metro line from Rouse Hill to Chatswood and the WestConnex M4 East six-lane tunnel — won't be until after the election.

More mega-projects will follow, including the 9km NorthConnex road tunnel in northwest Sydney, other stages of WestConnex with the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link also in the pipeline.

The next stage of the Metro line, from Chatswood to Sydenham, will open in 2024 with an election commitment

TRANSPORT POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL

NorthConnex, WestConnex, Western Harbour Tunnel and Northern Beaches Link all to be delivered. Metro West work to begin in 2020. Slashing rego for toll-road users.

LABOR

M4 Cashback to refund tolls for western Sydney motorists. Building West Metro, but scrapping Sydenham-Bankstown Metro line and Northern Beaches Tunnel. Free public transport for kids on Opal network.

Coalition has demonstrated it's committed to fixing roads and rail but the Opposition is hoping to capitalise on one very big sore point — tolls.

Sydney has nine tolled roads and there are more to come when future motorways and tunnels open.

A key centrepiece of Opposition leader Michael Daley's campaign is the M4 Cashback, reimbursing motorists using the Western Sydney road.

Late last year Ms Berejiklian attempted to outmanoeuvre the pledge by promising to halve vehicle registrations for drivers who spend \$15 each week on toll roads.

Labor will also build the West Metro but it will scrap the Metro line from Sydenham to Bankstown and the new tunnel to the Northern Beaches — using the money to pay for other promises.

Despite the multi-billion dollar spends on infrastructure and transport, the state government has battled to keep pace with the growth of Australia's biggest city.

The Premier — the daughter of immigrants — wants to slash migration and has established a panel of experts to provide advice on the contentious issue.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the current high rates of population growth are putting even more pressure on our infrastructure," Ms Berejiklian said last year.

to start work on the much-needed West Metro next year.

There is so much infrastructure on the way, it's said that whoever wins this election will find the next one a breeze.

Transport Minister Andrew Constance said voters will see "a different state in two years".

"We're in the midst of a transport revolution," Mr Constance told The Sunday Telegraph.

"We've delivered the largest electronic ticket rollout of any system in the world being Opal.

"We're now using that data to drive our planning and our thinking."

And it's that planning NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian is hoping voters will recognise at next weekend's ballot box and not the day-to-day construction disruptions these projects have caused.

Compared with Labor, the

“Some trains are really old. I was a bit scared to be honest... I thought the doors were going to fall off.”

Freshwater student Zali Oulton



MICHAEL DALEY

I will treat you, and your taxes, with respect

I want to put the people of NSW first. They have had enough of being ignored. I want to give government in NSW back to the people.

For too long people have been ignored by the Liberals and Nationals, whether you are living along the WestConnex, the Sydney light rail corridor or beside the dying Darling River.

The Liberal and National government's projects have been rammed through with little to no consultation with

local communities. There is no greater example of this than the Premier's stadiums policy. It is arrogant policy made by an out of touch government.

Good government is all about the right priorities and I will not spend \$2.2 billion on a stadium splurge. I will not knock down and rebuild a perfectly good stadium in Sydney's east.

Instead I will fund 5000 more teachers and introduce nurse-to-patient ratios for the

first time, to improve patient care. Under a government I lead, schools and hospitals that have been so badly neglected in the past eight years will be built or upgraded so everyone gets the education and healthcare they deserve.

The Premier likes to say you can have it all. My parents told me to always tell the truth so I say I won't promise you something I can't deliver.

I will treat you and your hard-earned taxes with respect.

I will listen to your concerns and spend your taxes wisely — on things that can really make a difference to you and your families. Initiatives like refunding the toll on the M4, free public transport on the Opal network for your kids or waiving the fees for TAFE courses. As a paperboy growing up in my neighbourhood, I would often sit and have a cup of tea and listen to people's stories. I learned that people didn't want handouts or ask to

be given special treatment, they just wanted decent services and to be heard and respected.

I have travelled around the state and met wonderful people who have simply asked to be heard — they're the experts, after all, the people who know their communities best.

They are the ones I will be listening to if I become premier in six days' time and I promise to do my best to make sure they are heard in Macquarie Street.

I want to put people first.



Every day is an amazing race to work

RIDING THE RAILS

MIRANDA WOOD

FOR 18-year-old Zali Oulton, commuting to college would be a much more enjoyable experience if some of Sydney's trains were given an upgrade.

Ms Oulton, who lives in Freshwater and studies fashion in Chippendale, spends a large part of her week commuting back and forth.

Sydney's older trains, some of which are decades old, are extremely outdated says Oulton, who spends about two hours commuting each day — an hour longer than the average Sydneysider, according to a study conducted by the Grattan Institute.

"I thought the doors were going to fall off," she said.

"Some trains are really old, like the one I was on this morning. I was a bit scared to be honest.

"There's definitely some room for improvement there, the new ones are a lot better, they're a lot nicer."

Ms Oulton, who juggles interning as well as working part-time as a receptionist, finds the exchange can be challenging at times.

"I do experience delays with the Manly ferries; tolls are also a bit hard," she said.

"It's so easy to cross the (Sydney Harbour) bridge, but you are charged for every time you cross. I think it's excessive."

When asked if her vote would be influenced by transport decisions made by the major parties, Ms Oulton said that she would consider changing her vote.

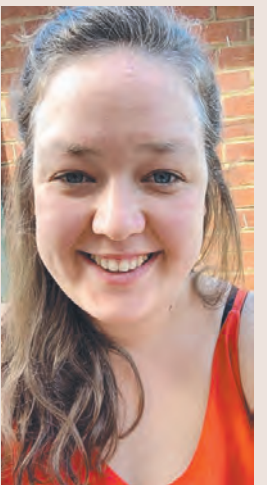
Zali Oulton makes the most of her four-hour daily public transport commute. Picture: Sam Rutty



CHERYL COOPER, 60

OCCUPATION.....SF retiree
LOCATION.....Coffs Harbour
ELECTORATE.....Coffs Harbour
2016 VOTE.....Greens
2019 VOTE INDEPENDENT

WHY "The two major parties don't understand how people really live, ignore climate change and feather their own nests. Given the Greens' factional fighting I have moved my support to independent Sally Townley, who is a great shire councillor and will really represent local people. I hope she replaces the Nationals here."



LAURA FRANKE, 24

OCCUPATION.....Nurse
LOCATION.....Wagga Wagga
ELECTORATE.....Wagga Wagga
2016 VOTE.....Greens
2019 VOTE LABOR

WHY "Nurse-to-patient ratios are a vital part of patient safety in rural hospitals. In rural wards, the current nurse-to-patient ratio is one nurse to six or eight patients. We really need the ratio to be one to four, which means hospitals need more funding. The health care system is changing, patients are becoming more acute and there's greater demand on nursing staff. Labor has promised better hospital ratios."



GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN

Why I'm fighting to make sure NSW has it all

I am proud to be your Premier. Every day, I am inspired by the great people who call NSW home, including our hardworking police, teachers, nurses and other providers of essential services. I am inspired by our tireless volunteers.

We have worked hard to build the economy so we can invest in new hospitals, schools, roads and public transport infrastructure — and take the pressure off you.

Next Saturday, you have the choice between a government that has a clear, positive plan on what we will do, and the track record to back it — and an opposition whose campaign is only about what it will not do.

Our community really does deserve to have it all. Only through the strong financial management of the NSW Liberals and Nationals government are we in a position where that is possible.

We have fixed the budget,

paid off the debt Labor left behind and supported businesses to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs, delivering NSW's lowest ever unemployment.

Labor promised 12 rail lines, but during 16 long years in office, they only ever delivered one half of one project.

This time, Labor want to cancel the South West Metro, the F6 extension, Western Harbour Tunnel and we know they don't support the M4 and

M5 extensions.

Unlike Michael Daley, I won't settle for second best.

Right now, we are delivering the greatest investment in public transport in Australian history. We are fixing our transport system. There are now 45 major projects underway, each worth more than \$100 million. We are investing more than ever in our hospitals — new facilities at places like Bankstown-Lidcombe, Tweed Valley and Nepean, and

recruiting an additional 5000 nurses and midwives.

We are building new schools, hiring an extra 4600 teachers, providing before and after school care in every public primary school, and clearing the maintenance backlog.

Of course, Labor think it's a choice between schools, hospitals or stadiums — because they couldn't manage the budget they never got the opportunity to build as we have.

I believe NSW can have it all.

Ben and Natalie Mudford, of Gilgandra. Mrs Mudford will be voting for the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.



Farm family's fight to make a future for their kids Keep the bush alive

THE BUSH VOTE

JOCELYN AIRTH

SPEECH pathologist Natalie Mudford moved to Gilgandra 14 years ago after marrying sixth generation farmer Brian Mudford.

Instantly, she fell in love with the tight-knit country town and the family farm, where the Mudfords are raising their four children, Chloe, 12, Alison, 10, Eliza, nine, and Ben, seven.

As NSW election day

approaches, Mrs Mudford is hoping that the Nationals lose the seat of Barwon for the first time since 1950.

"Barwon is a long held Nationals seat and I feel like they have taken us a bit for granted as a safe seat," Ms Mudford said.

"This year, I am voting for our Shooters, Fishers and Farmers candidate Roy Butler because I think he will be the best advocate for our entire region, not just the larger towns.

"We live on a farm and it's

the family business, so drought is a big issue for us. Grants and loans have been great to ensure the viability of farms, but we also need further provisions for the local businesses in town that supply for and support our farmers.

"If we're not earning money on our farm due to drought, we have no money to spend at businesses in town, which long term means they can't remain open, and when it does rain we'll have to travel further for supplies

and essential services.

"It's already happening. They've just announced the local Target Country is shutting and it's the only shop we have that provides economical clothing and homewares. So now we'll have to order online or travel to Dubbo with the added cost of fuel."

As a disability service provider, Mrs Mudford said health care and the NDIS are crucial factors.

"My NDIS participants currently have limited choice

and control and there have been a large number of teething issues with the roll-out in our region," she said.

"We need support from the state government to advocate for clients in rural and remote areas, as well as helping smaller disability providers establish their businesses to allow greater choice and control."

Mrs Mudford said an SFF candidate would be in a better position to advocate and negotiate for funding and services the region needs —

and she doesn't approve of city stadium rebuilds.

"New stadiums that cost millions of dollars are of no benefit to us in our town, we need essential services like appropriate health care, water sustainability and supply and long-term jobs growth," she said.

"I would love for my four children to be able to return here, after getting a trade or qualification, to be part of a thriving smaller community and to be able to keep it thriving."



JACK HOGAN, 23

OCCUPATION.....Agronomist
LOCATION.....Deniliquin
ELECTORATE.....Murray
2016 VOTE.....Nationals
2019 VOTE.....**SHOOTERS**

WHY: Australian farmers have lost their voice. If we want Australian agriculture to thrive we need a government that will focus on looking after our farming business. If there isn't change we will lose our farming families to overseas corporations and lose the ability to purchase fresh Australian-grown produce.

Country roads lead

REGIONAL NSW

JACK MORPHET

THE fate of the state is in the hands of country voters, who could cripple the Coalition unless the Nationals are able to spend their way out of trouble.

Both major parties have promised to spend all \$4.2 billion from the sale of NSW's stake in the Snowy Hydro scheme in rural and

regional NSW, which has under-written billions of dollars' worth of promised roads, schools, nurses and hospitals.

Since 2011 the Coalition has spent \$31.9 billion on improving regional roads and by 2023 every major highway in NSW is expected to be completely sealed, but the Nationals have promised another \$1 billion to fix local roads and bridges. The bush lays claim to 70 per cent of the state's \$2.2 billion

local roads repair bill, which the NRMA has warned is a danger to country drivers that councils can't afford to fix on their own.

As part of the Nationals' rural and regional road spend, it has pledged to take over 15,000km of pothole-plagued local roads currently under council control.

Labor has gone close to matching the Nationals' proposed spending on roads, promising to stump up \$900 million to fix local roads



Waiting for sweet rains of salvation

WATER

JACK MORPHET


THE “wasting” of water has exploded as a white-hot political issue at the 2019 election, and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is furiously fanning community anger, hoping voters will punish the National Party.

The entire state is in drought, with severity ranging from “intense drought” (34.4 per cent) to “drought” (50.3 per cent) to “drought affected” (15.3 per cent). Nowhere in NSW is yet classed as “recovering” or “non drought” and there is little hope of significant rain ahead.

The Nationals, if elected, are promising to increase drought expenditure by \$350 million, from \$1.1 billion to \$1.45 billion, through more long-term, low-interest loans.

The SFF would classify drought a natural disaster like flood and fire, which used to trigger emergency cash and subsidies, but was scrapped in 2013 in favour of loans supposed to future-proof farmers from times of crisis. New dams are the biggest investment in the Nationals’ cash splash, including \$560 million to raise the Wyangala Dam wall across the Lachlan River in the southwestern slopes and \$650 million to raise the Warra-gamba Dam wall in Sydney’s southwest.

Rather than building more water infrastructure, the SSF want to use their potential balance of power in the next parliament to dismantle water



JOHN HOGAN, 48

OCCUPATIONFarmer	WHY: “I’m voting on strength of strong local member Steph Cooke who has done tremendous work for our local communities, small business and with extra funding for roads. Although more could be done for NSW farmers in marketing of their products. We need a fair playing field. I also believe more infrastructure and jobs need to be created in regional areas not just in big regional cities.”
LOCATIONBethunga	
ELECTORATECootamundra	
2016 VOTEShooters	
2019 VOTE NATS	

regulations and spend \$5 billion in anticipated savings to salvage the worst drought-affected towns. The SFF would also scrap the Murray Darling Basin Plan for at least five years, a radical ploy that would require NSW to cut a deal with Queensland to keep water flowing.

Irrigated agriculture has already slowed to a trickle in NSW, despite attempts to blame cotton and rice growers for the death of up to a million fish along a 40km stretch of the Darling River over summer.

The current cotton crop in northern NSW is only 1 per cent of a typical year, while fruit-growers in the south are irrigating only to keep trees alive.

The Nationals have pledged \$25 million to revive the Bradfield Scheme (piping excess water from Queensland into the Murray-Darling system).

Labor has promised a Special Commission of Inquiry into the Darling River fish kills, continued drought relief, and working with Canberra to better prepare for the next drought.



parties where the real power belongs

rated poor and very poor. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers supported increased funding for country roads and pledged to use its influence in parliament to build rest stops at regular intervals on major highways with well-maintained, well-lit toilets, sheltered tables and chairs, and parking for trucks.

With all 10 of the state’s ice hot spots in rural and regional NSW, Labor has promised to build four

ice rehab clinics outside of Sydney, while the Nationals have promised a new Cabinet minister for ice addiction among young people to save the next generation.

Under the Nationals the bush is in line for 3700 nurses, doctors, midwives and health workers into towns and regional cities, as well as 64 dedicated palliative care nurses.

Labor’s promise of nurse-to-patient ratios paid for by a tax on luxury cars and boats extends to

the bush, although Labor leader Michael Daley hasn’t said whether the increased stamp duty will extend to work utes and trucks worth more than \$100,000.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers campaigned heavily on declining standards of rural healthcare, repeating people in regional NSW lived longer than Sydneysiders in 1996 but now rural residents are dying five years earlier, on average.

The SFF pledged to fight for more doctors on better pay and a \$500 million kitty for regional hospital equipment, to stop country communities hosting chook raffles just to afford lifesaving machinery such as X-Ray and CT scanners.

The Nationals will throw \$400 million at the perennial issue of poor or non-existent mobile reception in the bush, promising more mobile black spot towers and improve internet services.

REGIONAL POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL
\$1 billion to fix country roads and bridges; \$400m for mobile and internet connectivity; 3700 extra nurses, doctors, midwives and health workers, plus 64 palliative care nurses.
LABOR
Four ice rehab clinics out of

Sydney; nurse-to-patient ratios funded by a tax on luxury cars which may not apply to farm vehicles; \$900m on bush roads.
SHOOTERS, FISHERS AND FARMERS PARTY
More doctors on better pay and \$500m in bush hospital equipment.

Long wish list of

FAMILY MATTERS

LISA MAYOH

NORTHERN beaches mother of three Jemma McGeachie and her growing family need solutions to their traffic problems in the upcoming state election, with improved roads, public transport and ease in congestion at the top of their wish list.

The Liberal voter said life has been good under the current government and premier Gladys Berejiklian, but is adamant there is always room for improvement – especially when dealing with stressful traffic on a daily basis.

“Hospitals, schools, roads, childcare – we just need a state government to really do what matters and help the average NSW family get ahead, and make life easier,” Seaford’s Ms McGeachie told The Sunday Telegraph.

“Life is hard in Sydney – it’s expensive and it’s busy and the high cost of schooling, childcare and doctor’s bills make it tough.

“Add traffic and congestion to that stress and it’s enough to make you want to move away and settle somewhere quieter.”

Raised on the Central Coast, the physio said she could see why young families were leaving Sydney in droves, but hoped election promises would lead to much needed reprieve.

Cost of living: do you feel life has become more expensive? What in particular has become too expensive, unaffordable — do you have to be more careful with your money now than previously?

“Sydney is very expensive, and I feel like it’s just getting worse. We pay a lot of money for our three sons to go to good schools, and extra curricular activities really add up.

“From petrol to meals and car services, doctor’s visits, uniforms and sports registrations, the cost of living has never been higher.”

DEMOLISHING THE STADIUMS AND MOVING THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

“Sport is really important for the state and we really embody that in our three sports-crazed sons. I feel Sydney as an international city that needs state of the art sports facilities in close proximity to the CBD. The money to move the Powerhouse could be spent more strategically. Paramatta is already in an infrastructure overload.”

HOUSING, PLANNING AND OVER-DEVELOPMENT

“We are in the housing market and we know how important it is to have a family home. Residential planning and development in greater Sydney is an important investment, as families get prices out of Sydney suburbs and need to live further out of the city. That’s another reason we need help on the roads and public transport as they struggle with longer, more stressful commutes.”

EDUCATION

“Schools absolutely need a focus on funding but I think it’s important the main focus is ensuring we get the best teachers and resources we can into our schools. Teachers do so much to help our kids – they deserve to be paid so much more than what they do. We need to entice young, inspiring, motivated young people to become teachers and keep this valuable career going – and we need to do that with better entitlements.”

PILL TESTING

“I do not agree with pill testing- a deemed ‘safe’ drug could have adverse reactions to an individual and have a disastrous effect. The government cannot be responsible for a personal choice and for testing of drug dealers products.”



f improvements

HOSPITALS AND HEALTHCARE

“Hospitals need more investment. The new Northern Beaches Hospital has taken a while and it has its teething problems, but it was really needed in the area. I am often in the hospital system if my sons break a bone or get sick, and emergency-waiting times can always see improvement. It's important - these are our kid's lives we're talking about.

CONGESTION/TRAFFIC/ PUBLIC TRANSPORT

“This is a big one for us as we live on the northern beaches and have to take the notorious Spit Bridge to and from work and school every day. There needs to be a long-term view for transport in the north and all of Sydney to help ease congestion across the spit and through Mosman and the city. Improve public transport so people get out of their cars.”

WATER AND DROUGHT

“We have a lot of friends who live in the country and what they are going through every day is devastating. I would like to see the government do more to help our struggling farmers by putting in place a long-term strategy and infrastructure that can help them long term rather than giving lots now and little later.”

Jemma and Will McGeachie with their boys Harrison 9, Lachlan 7 and Finn 4, and dog Max, at home in Seaforth. Picture: Tim Hunter.

“Life is hard in Sydney – the cost of schooling, childcare and doctor's bills make it tough.

Seaforth mother of three Jemma McGeachie

Koalas get a cuddle, but not the brumbies

ENVIRONMENT

LINDA SILMALIS

A KOALA reserve, the planting of millions of trees and significantly boosting solar energy to bring down household electricity bills will occur whether the Coalition or Labor wins the State election.

With climate and environment emerging as a key State election issue, both parties are playing for the green vote.

The recent turmoil within the NSW Greens has buoyed Labor in trying to win back its prized seat of Balmain, while the Nationals also want Ballina back. Labor has pledged to ban single-use plastic bags, rebates on solar panels and a Climate Change Summit to determine how to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The Sunday Telegraph can reveal Labor will today announce \$10,000 cash hand-outs for wildlife groups across the State, to help carers look-

POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL

Five million trees, koala reserve, no-interest loans for solar, more parks and playgrounds.

LABOR

Six million trees, "koala national park" on Georges River, ban on single-use plastic bags and straws, \$10,000 grants for wildlife groups, curbing brumbies in Kosciuszko.

GREENS

Lower emissions from wood-fire heaters, lawnmowers and cars, 100% green power by 2020.

ing after rescued animals.

In a move that will upset the Snowy Mountains horse community but please the environmentalists, the party has pledged to rip up the Wild Horse Heritage Act to curb feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park.

The Coalition has made a pitch to city-dwellers, promising more parks, playground and open space while also add-

ing a new Minister of Public Space.

Both the Coalition and Labor have pledged to protect the State's koala population, with a dedicated reserve.

Labor wants to create a "koala national park" on government and council-owned land along the Georges River, while the Coalition has pledged to create a new national park and koala wilderness area at Canyonleigh, about 25km north west of Bowral.

Both parties have also pledged to plant trees - the Coalition has promised five million with Labor raising the stakes at six million.

The battle to reduce household electricity bills while protecting the environment has led to a Coalition promise to roll out solar energy and battery storage for 300,000 homes through no interest loans in a move that would unlock \$3.2 billion investment in renewables.

It has also offered a new annual \$200 energy rebate for around 130,000 self-funded retirees.

Labor has also offered rebates to help 500,000 households to install rooftop solar in a move aimed to reduce electricity bills over the next decade. It has also promised to build a new State-owned and run renewable energy company while supporting investment in more than seven gigawatts of renewable power.

The Greens have campaigned on a rapid build of renewable energy and storage technologies with binding five per cent targets to result in 100 per cent green electricity generation by 2030, a ban on the clearing of all native forests and marine protected areas.

It also wants to mandate lower emissions from wood heaters, lawn-mowers and cars.

Michael Daley will go into bat for Featherdale's Olivia the wombat. Picture: Sam Ruttyn

MADELINE ROBINSON, 24

OCCUPATION

Mental health case manager

LOCATION.....Newcastle

ELECTORATE.....Newcastle

2016 VOTE.....Labor

2019 VOTE.....LABOR

WHY Newcastle's public transport system needs reform and Labor has committed to this. Environmental policies which Labor have committed to are achievable and vital in ensuring a just transition from current strategies which govern Australia's environmental policy. Water management under previous state governments has been a monumental disaster and needs to be addressed. Reforming abortion laws to decriminalise in NSW is very close to my heart. Also, enough of this reckless spending on Sydney stadiums and useless showy infrastructure projects.



“The extra resources will ensure we target areas of crime without affecting resources on the beat

Police and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant

Both major parties are promising more police officers. Picture: Gordon McComiskie



Lockout lock-up

Parties vie to boost cop numbers and fight ice

LAW AND ORDER

AVA BENNY-MORRISON
CRIME REPORTER

BOOSTING the number of police on the beat and balancing Sydney’s night time economy with lockout laws have emerged as key election issues on the law and order battleground.

Law enforcement has dominated election campaigns in previous years but with the government riding a falling trend in major crime rates, it’s less prominent this time.

An extra 1500 police is the key promise for the major parties with both Labor and the Coalition committing to spend \$583 million over four years to create the new positions.

A Berejiklian government will put some of those officers in new elderly abuse prevention and child protection register officer roles at every police area command around the state.

Its focus is also on mid-level organised crime with a promise to add 91 officers to Regional Enforcement Squads and the bikie-focused Strike Force Raptor teams, now based in

Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

“Our General Duties police already do a tremendous job investigating and prosecuting crimes like elder abuse and monitoring individuals on the Child Protection Register,” Police and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant said.

“The extra resources announced will enhance those efforts, and ensure we have dedicated officers to target these areas of crime without affecting resources on the beat in local communities.”

Citing the risk of lone-wolf terror attacks and a spike in assaults on

police, Labor promised to spend \$80 million upgrading security to police stations.

It falls just short of the Berejiklian government splashing \$100 million on building new police stations in regional hubs, including an active armed offender facility in Dubbo.

At a time when ending violence against women continues to dominate public debate, Labor has promised to legislate 10 days domestic violence leave.

Another big ticket issue has been how to tackle the ice epidemic. The Berejiklian Government has established a Special Commission of Inquiry into Ice with public hearings due to be held this year.

Both major parties are refusing to budge when it comes to winding back the lock out laws, which have the support of the NSW Police Association.

JUSTICE & NIGHT-LIFE POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL

Extra 1500 police, new elder abuse and child protection register officers, 91 more officers for regional enforcement squads and Strike Force Raptor. \$100m on new police stations in regional hubs, a special ice inquiry and \$2.5m for legal street festivals

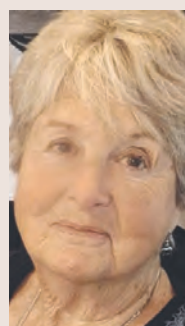
LABOR

\$80m in upgraded security for police stations, \$583m over four years for an extra 1500 police officers, 10 days’ domestic violence leave, \$35m live music fund.

Instead Labor says it will commit \$35 million to “saving live music” with a big investment in supporting emerging artists, tours and appointing a new Music and Night Time Economy Minister.

About \$3 million will be for keeping live music venues open but it’s essentially for soundproofing and other infrastructure.

The Liberal and National investment in this area is less with \$2.5 million for encouraging street festivals, live music and establishing a Music Now Fund. While Labor’s strong focus on the night time economy is attractive to younger voters, the Berejiklian government has echoed its actions so far, including relaxing lock out laws for 34 live music venues and cutting red tape for small bars.



COLLEEN MORONEY, 79

OCCUPATION..... Retired academic
LOCATION..... Old Bar
ELECTORATE..... Myall Lakes
2016 VOTE..... Nats
2019 VOTE..... **NATS**

WHY “Our local member Steven Bromhead has been an excellent, approachable representative for our area. I have noticed many upgraded projects in our area (Old Bar). He has taken a keen interest in the young people, providing many enhanced sporting venues as well as parks and playgrounds for families.”



Young people like these who want to have fun at festivals without drugs deserve to be safe.
Picture: David Swift

A spoonful of sugar

HEALTH, PILL TESTING

JANE HANSEN

MORE nurses, easing the crush in emergency waiting rooms and competing hospital rebuilds — health is a major battleground of the election.

The Berejiklian Government is promising an \$8.4 billion investment in an additional 29 major health infrastructure projects over the next four years on top of the \$10b in upgrades currently underway.

A \$1.3b redevelopment of Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital on a new site will expand emergency, critical care, medical and surgical services.

New hospitals are planned for Tweed, Eurobodalla and a \$780 million redevelopment

HEALTH POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL
\$8.4b in health infrastructure, 8000 new paediatric surgeries, 5000 nurses, \$88m on mental health workers at schools.

LABOR
5500 new nurses, 1500 paramedics, Q fever vaccinations, \$5.4m for paediatric heart surgery.

ONE NATION
New Western Sydney hospital.

GREENS
Pill testing at music festivals.

of John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle. Plans for a Rouse Hill hospital will also go ahead, the Government has promised.

Westmead, Randwick/ Prince of Wales Hospital, RPA,

Nepean, Royal North Shore, Concord, Campbelltown, St George, Ryde, Blacktown and Mt Druitt redevelopments are already in progress and both children's hospitals are being upgraded, including a Children's Cancer Centre at Randwick.

The site of new Tweed Heads hospital could upset Nationals incumbent Geoff Provost. Labor has pledged to build the new hospital at Kings Forest but the Liberal/National government has approved the build on state significant farm land near Kingscliff.

The Government is promising an extra 8000 paediatric surgeries over the next four years, an extra 10,000 cataract surgeries, a \$4.6m funding package over

four years to provide better access to kids' allergy services, \$81.5m on operating theatres at Sutherland Hospital.

The government will spend \$88m on qualified mental health professionals at every public school.

The Coalition is also promising 8300 frontline health staff to be employed over the next four years, including 5000 nurses and midwives and 100 new palliative care nurses.

Labor is promising new hospitals in Sydney's North West, Eurobodalla on the South Coast and Tweed as well as several major hospital upgrades.

In addition they promise: \$5.4 million to fix paediatric cardiac services in Sydney

which has led to surgeons at Randwick and Westmead competing for resources.

Labor also promises \$4.7 million to restore low-risk maternity services at the Yass District Hospital. Labor will hire an extra 5500 nurses; 1500 extra paramedics; 250 extra hospital security staff and offer free Q fever vaccinations.

Pauline Hanson's One Nation, led by former Labor man Mark Latham, is promising to divert \$810m in stadium rebuild money to capital works and maintenance for country hospitals, plus a new public hospital in Western Sydney funded by abandoning the Powerhouse Museum relocation.

Pill testing is also a

flashpoint after the recent spate of young lives lost to party drugs.

The Liberal/Nationals are sticking by a 'say no to drugs' approach with strict new protocols imposed on music festival organisers.

Labor is considering pill testing but not before calling for a drug summit to hear the evidence of experts including police, clinicians, academics, family members and former users.

Greens NSW MPs Cate Faehrmann and David Shoebridge are calling for a harm minimisation approach to treat drug use as a health issue, not a criminal one. They are calling for pill testing at music festivals and an end to police dog searches.

JASON PATTERSON, 46



OCCUPATION Paramedic
LOCATION.....Goulburn
ELECTORATE.....Goulburn
2016 VOTE.....Liberal
2019 VOTE ONE NATION

WHY I feel the major parties have moved away from considering regional communities and just focus on what's happening in the Sydney bubble. Goulburn has been a strong Liberal seat for a long time, and sometimes in seats that have been owned by one party for a while, not a lot gets done. More energy goes into a swinging seat. If we can make Goulburn a marginal seat, we might get more opportunities.

NICHOLAS GREVINK, 27



OCCUPATION...Electrician
LOCATION.....Orange
ELECTORATE.....Orange
2016 VOTE.....Shooters
2019 VOTE SHOOTERS

WHY My electorate voted for SFS last time, and I think it will be the same for this election. They seem to be more focused on the rural community and farmers, more engaged with our community than the nationals. I think it's important that the government does work to make sure the farming market in Australia is competitive.

THOMAS CROWE, 20



OCCUPATION.....Kitchen hand
LOCATION.....Noraville
ELECTORATE.....Wyong
2016 VOTE.....n/a
2019 VOTE GREENS

WHY I will vote Greens because I think they are more environmentally conscious. I also believe other parties employ policies that are too favourable to large and harmful corporations. I think the biggest issues affecting Australia and NSW are climate change, support for education and the poor conditions present in refugee camps. I believe these issues need to be urgently addressed.

Chantelle Sarkis, with her children Jake and Lara, outside Concord High School. Picture: Sam Rutty



Chalk one up for kids

EDUCATION

JACK MORPHET

PUBLIC schools posed a key battleground this election campaign, and parents are the winner either way.

The two major parties have one-upped each other throughout the campaign, leaving themselves with almost identical education policy platforms.

Regardless of which party wins the election, parents can expect thousands of new teachers in hundreds of new schools, 1000 demountables demolished and more airconditioned comfort for kids.

The Coalition campaign kicked off with weeks of policy announcements designed to please parents, but Labor blunted the attack by pledging to match each of the Liberals' commitments and if elected, Michael Daley says he will outspend the Coalition by about \$1 billion.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Education Minister Rob Stokes pledged 4600 new teachers over the next four years, only for Labor to promise 5065 new teachers.

The Coalition's new teacher workforce worth \$2 billion would staff 190 new and upgraded schools worth \$6.5 billion over four years, eight of which have already been opened.

But according to Labor, the Coalition government has closed 15 more schools than it has opened since coming to office in 2011.

Like clockwork, Labor last week pledged to spend \$7.4 billion building and upgrading 204 schools.

The Coalition has promised to wipe the maintenance backlog in all 2200 schools by 2020 at a cost of \$1.2 billion, which is a growing problem as cookie-cutter schools built in the 1960s and '70s for post-war Baby Boomers have become sweat boxes plagued by rising damp.

Labor blames the Coalition for letting the maintenance backlog quadruple since 2011, but matched the pledge to clear outstanding works.

Under a Coalition government, every child in the state will have access to before- and after-school care, with

primary schools to open playgrounds, classrooms and halls so kids can be cared for from 7am until 6pm by 2021.

In a rare difference between the parties, Labor won't ensure all schools have before- and after-school care, but will ensure all new public primary schools have preschool or daycare services to save parents the hassle of "the double drop-off".

Demountables have long been the third rail for education ministers, who defend their necessity accommodating fluctuating school enrolments in the face of fierce criticism they clog up much-needed space in playgrounds and are stiflingly hot in summer.

Labor leader Michael Daley and Shadow Education Minister Jihad Dib accused the Coalition government of failing to keep up with the growing student population, as one-third of the state's demountable classrooms are more than 10 years old.

Labor pledged \$1.4 billion to replace 1000 of the state's 5000 demountables with bricks-and-mortar classrooms.

After the Coalition initially claimed its record school build would negate the need for 1000 demountables by creating 2000 new permanent classrooms, it has also promised to replace 1000 demountables.

Both parties will aircondition every new school and offset the running costs with solar panels, but the Coalition only promised to aircondition the hottest existing schools — at a cost of \$500 million.

Labor would aircondition every existing school — at a cost of \$800 million — scrapping the requirement schools must swelter through an average maximum January temperature of 33C to qualify.

The Berejiklian government has already started on a once-in-a-generation review of the curriculum to pare back the education system to core values of English, maths and the sciences, and has promised every public high school will have a full-time school counsellor or psychologist.

Labor has promised free public transport for all school-age kids and will give \$5000 cash bonuses to every P&C group in the state.

I'll believe it when I see it

JACK MORPHET

INNER west mum Chantelle Sarkis doesn't trust either party to tear down 1000 demountables at the same time her kids' school is straining from an influx of families moving into new high-rise developments.

Both Ms Sarkis' children, Lara, Year 9, and Jake, Year 7,

already have classes in Concord High School's nine demountable buildings.

Concord High is the only high school for kids in apartment towers springing up along the Parramatta river at Liberty Grove and Wentworth Point.

"The entire time my kids have been at Concord, they've both used the demountables for various classes," Ms Sarkis

said. "Every year more and more kids come to the school because our area is growing and all the government does is drop off one or two more demountables."

"The parties say they'll get rid of demountables but I don't believe it."

Ms Sarkis is a swing voter who hasn't decided which party she will vote for.



ROBERT DUNN, 83

OCCUPATION.....Retired farmer
LOCATION.....Kangaroo Valley
ELECTORATE.....Kiama
2016 VOTE.....Liberal
2019 VOTE.....LIBS or NATS

WHY In 2016, I voted for the Liberal Party because I was very impressed with the capabilities of Mike Baird and he was openly a Christian man. This year, I am somewhat disenchanted with the Liberal Party with all the money they are spending on infrastructure in Sydney when some of this money would do so much for regional Australia. I will probably vote Liberal or National because I don't trust Labor.



KARLYN MAJOR, 28

OCCUPATION.....Graphic designer
LOCATION.....Lismore
ELECTORATE.....Lismore
2016 VOTE.....Greens
2019 VOTE.....GREENS

WHY Our community needs a fresh approach to politics. Someone who will defend the environment, take climate action, advocate for and strengthen our diverse region and support public health and education. The Greens' strong environmental and humanitarian focus is important to me.

High-rise heaven

Nothing can stop march of skyscrapers that ate Sydney

DEVELOPMENT

BEN PIKE

VOTERS sick of seeing apartment blocks mushrooming across the city need to understand that the building is not going to stop.

Regardless of whether the Coalition or Labor win on March 23, the federal government will continue to pump high migration levels to ensure the economy grows.

That, combined with births, is taking the state's population past eight million, which means more houses and apartments need to be built in existing areas and on the edge of Sydney.

The difference between the two parties is how many

CITY PLANNING POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL \$340m

for improved playgrounds, dog parks and open spaces, continued infrastructure spend to take pressure off suburbs.

LABOR Dump planned precincts that jam apartments into chosen neighbourhoods, scrapping medium-density housing code that allows duplexes and terraces on suburban blocks.

homes will spring up and in which suburbs they will be.

NSW opposition planning spokeswoman Tania Mihailuk said Labor will scrap the remaining planned precincts — policies which concentrate apartment-building in

particular suburbs — and direct the Greater Sydney Commission back to the drawing board.

"The existing targets deliberately disadvantage some parts of Sydney, forcing them to bear the brunt of rampant residential development while, under the Liberals, the GSC has favoured blue ribbon suburbs with lenient development limits while concentrating development in Western Sydney," she said.

Combined with changes that could see more apartments in northeast Sydney, Labor are also pushing to end the medium-density housing code. The code makes it easier to turn houses into duplexes and terraces, with no input from neighbours.

Labor says the policy will destroy suburbs (and most local councils agree) but Planning Minister Anthony Roberts has refused to be moved on the policy.

Developer groups remain concerned, however, that Labor's anti-development rhetoric could put a dampener on the housing construction industry, which directly employs 300,000 people.

While health, education, roads and cost of living have been front and centre this campaign, Mr Roberts has largely been invisible.

Concerns about overdevelopment have meant many major announcements have been delayed until after the election.

Harry Triguboff's proposed 47-storey tower building at Macquarie Park is one example.

"You have over-development when there's no infrastructure and we're spending ... almost \$90 billion on infrastructure over the forward estimates," Mr Roberts said.

"We're purchasing open space now, we're creating open space, we're creating liveable communities and effectively we're mopping up Labor's mess."

Mr Roberts has pointed to a long list of reforms that he says will continue to make the planning system fairer and more transparent.

These changes include \$340 million for new and improved playgrounds, dog

parks and trees across Sydney and NSW.

The Coalition has also established independent Hearing and Assessment Panels and Local Planning Panels, which mean planning experts and not local councils will decide on large projects.

Limits on boarding house developments, progress on the business park surrounding Badgerys Creek Airport and record numbers of building approvals have all happened on the Coalition's watch.

The question remains whether the Liberals will continue to cop the blame for playing catch-up on the infrastructure and homes that the former Labor government failed to deliver.

High-rise developments are becoming more common across the city.
Picture: Sam Rutty



“The existing targets deliberately disadvantage some parts of Sydney

NSW opposition planning spokeswoman Tania Mihailuk

Our idyllic street is just screwed



Llew Kennedy and councillor Donna Davis in the shadow of the housing development at Epping. Picture: AAP

Who dares say 's' word?



Demolition work under way at Allianz Stadium. Picture: AAP

ARTS AND CULTURE

MIRANDA WOOD

THE knockdown and rebuild of Allianz Stadium is the gift that keeps on giving for Michael Daley, almost single-handedly putting him neck and neck with the Premier for the top job.

From the bush to Bondi, the demolition of the Moore Park venue has proved a lightning rod for discontent, and a dog whistle issue for an opposition leader keen to blow the government up.

Sloppy political handling and several flip-flops saw the taxpayer spend on stadiums grow from \$600 million to \$2.2 billion which includes the work at Allianz Stadium, the refurbishment of ANZ Stadium at Homebush and the new Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta.

Front and centre of every twist has been Sports Minister Stuart Ayres, who might not enjoy a post-election reshuffle, with his Coalition colleagues fuming and wondering how a sporting 'goodie bag' was turned into a potential government-killer.

It even paralysed Gladys Berejiklian on the campaign trail with the Premier briefly unwilling to defend the splurge or even mention the word "stadium".

The Labor stadium policy is simple: Parramatta is already finished and the election winner will open it next month; ANZ gets the government's billion-dollar do-over; while at Allianz, the bulldozers get stopped and the SCG trust gets a loan to fix it up again.

Oh, and Alan Jones gets fired, along with the entire SCG trust (bar a few sporting legends, who will be allowed

STADIUMS POLICY GUIDE

LIBERAL/NATIONAL Knock down and rebuild Allianz Stadium, refurbish ANZ Stadium, move Powerhouse to Parramatta, upgrade Opera House.

LABOR Keep Powerhouse at Ultimo, new \$500m museum at Parramatta, cancel Allianz knockdown, sack SCG Trust.

to stay on). Even in the world of high arts, it's a political battlefield, especially in Sydney's west.

The Coalition plans to move the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, partly funded by selling off part of the existing site at Ultimo.

Labor will cancel the move and the sale — committing \$45 million to fix Ultimo while spending \$500 million on a new "world class cultural institution" at Parramatta.

Western Sydney Business Chamber executive director David Borger criticised the policy earlier this year, saying: "We've had many decades of waiting for cultural infrastructure. In the meantime, governments have spent billions of dollars in Sydney CBD."

Labor will also inject \$100 million into a Western Sydney cultural fund while the Coalition is investing in the upgrade of the Sydney Opera House, Art Gallery of NSW and the Australian Museum.

Ms Berejiklian will also be hoping the \$100 vouchers to encourage kids into sports and the creative arts will swing parents her way.

And just to make sure, she announced last month the popular Active Kids program could be accessed twice in one year, saving mums and dads \$200 per child.

Our homes in "heritage" hell

OVERSHADOWED

BEN PIKE

ROSEBANK Ave used to be an idyllic Australian cul-de-sac where kids would play cricket on the road and backyards were bathed in sunlight.

Now, "it's screwed". A series of terrible planning decisions since 2011 has made this Epping area unrecognisable.

In an unusual move, a row of

backyard fences are the boundary between areas zoned medium and low density.

As a result, residents such as Llew Kennedy have apartment dwellers staring into their backyard and rear windows.

Ms Kennedy, who has been there for 32 years, said there are now "hundreds and hundreds of apartments" in the area.

Residents like her are also prevented from selling for a

reasonable price because there has been a state government heritage listing put on the street, preventing developers from building on the site.

Parramatta Labor councillor Donna Davis said: "Residents now have these monstrosities on both sides of the street."

"Rosebank Ave is a classic example where the community was not given the opportunity to be properly heard," Ms Davis, whose council now governs the area, said.